



News Release

Kansas Department of Agriculture • 109 SW 9th Street • Topeka, KS 66612 • (785) 296-3556

Contact: Lisa Taylor
Public Information Officer
(785) 296-2653

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2002

‘Tis the season for home pest control

TOPEKA - Warmer days signal the beginning of the home pest control season, when bugs get active and are busy finding new ways into your home. Although it is inevitable that you will find a few bugs in your home each year, you can keep them in check with regular home maintenance and pest control strategies.

When you find a bug, ask yourself a few questions.

What is it and how many are there? Don't panic at the sight of one insect. Every home has bugs from time to time. If you find only one, you may not have a problem. That bug may have just wandered in. Also, try to identify the bug so you can decide the best way to deal with it. Some bugs aren't a problem and can even help to control other pests.

Where is it coming from? Find out how the pest got in. Look for a hole in the wall, a crack in the floor, or a torn window screen. Look for gaps around water pipes, or electrical and gas lines that come into your home. Sometimes bugs hitchhike. They come in with your newspaper, in boxes, on your clothes, in pop bottles, or in bags of pet food or flour. Where did you find the bug? Look for food or water nearby. Pests that find food or water will stay longer.

How can I get rid of it? Try the old-fashioned way for some bugs — step on them or use a fly swatter. Also try wiping them up with a wet, soapy sponge or paper towel, or picking them up with a vacuum (and throw away the bag). Or, use a trap. If you choose a trap, pick one that is designed specifically for your pest and follow all directions on the package. Make sure you put traps where kids and pets can't reach them, since some may contain pesticides that could be harmful if eaten or touched.

Simple home repairs, cleaning and proper food storage are the best ways to keep pests out.

- Fix leaky toilets, pipes or faucets.
- Caulk around windows and floor boards.
- Remove damp or wet wood.
- Keep empty pop bottles outside, or in sealed plastic bags.
- Wipe up food scraps and clean dishes right away.
- Keep food, including pet food, in sealed containers.
- Clean up grease or food that splashes around stoves and sinks.

If you decide to use pesticides yourself, be careful. Pesticides come in different forms — sprays, bug “bombs,” dusts, or baits. Some pesticides kill bugs on contact, and others have to be eaten by the bugs. Pesticides are not one size fits all. Match the product to the pest and think about where you will be using it. For example, some products can't be used where food is prepared.

MORE

HOME PEST
ADD 1

Choose pesticides that are least toxic. Pesticide labels say CAUTION, WARNING, or DANGER. These words tell you something about how harmful the product is. “Caution” means the least harmful, “warning” means more harmful and “danger” means very harmful. Choose products labeled “caution” when you can. Think about who might touch or breathe the pesticide after you apply it. Sprays, liquids and bug “bombs” may leave a film or vapor that kids or pets could crawl into or breathe. Always wash your hands after using a pesticide, and open windows to get fresh air into the room.

Ask questions. There are many pesticides to choose from. If you want to know more about different products, ask the salesperson or call the product manufacturer’s phone number on the label. Buy pesticides from reliable stores, and beware of miracle cures. No pesticide can guarantee control of pests. Quick-fix products may not be legal, and could be harmful.

Read the pesticide label and follow the directions. The label is on the front and back of the container. It tells you important things: what pests it kills, how much to apply, where to apply it, how to protect yourself with gloves or glasses, what to do if someone is poisoned. All legal pesticides come in special containers with a label that explains what they contain and how they are to be used. Don’t buy products that do not have a label. Also, do not use more than the label tells you to use. More is not better. It could expose you or your family to unneeded pesticides, it’s illegal and it’s a waste of your money.

If you don’t feel comfortable tackling pests on your own, hire a professional. Pest control businesses must be licensed by the Kansas Department of Agriculture’s pesticide and fertilizer program and they must employ certified commercial applicators and registered pest control technicians. Commercial pesticide applicators must pass a comprehensive exam to become certified and the technicians working under their supervision must receive verifiable training. Ask to see the applicator’s certification or registration, or call KDA’s pesticide and fertilizer program at (785) 296-3786 to verify that the business is licensed.

Licensed businesses are required to provide you with documentation of pesticide applications and, if you request it, a copy of the pesticide label and material safety data sheet. These records contain important information you can refer to if you become concerned and want to know more about the pesticides that were applied.

Remember, pesticides are poisons. Keep all pesticides locked away from kids and pets, buy and mix only what you need, and keep pesticides in their original containers with the labels intact.

If you think someone has been poisoned, call your local poison control center immediately. If you do not have a community-based poison control center, call the national poison control center (800) 222-1222. Keep this phone number with your emergency numbers, and try to have the pesticide container with you when you call.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture’s pesticide and fertilizer program protects public health by promoting the safe use of pesticides and fertilizers.